The Hampden Hippocrat

A Bulletin for the Hampden District of the Massachusetts Medical Society

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GUEST EDITORIAL

by S. Q. Lapius

Now that the self-styled Hippocrat, disregarding the precepts of the Wise Man of Cos, has rushed into the mele of post-war world-planning to become embroiled with sky-pilots and disillusioned French and Chinese men of letters, a counter attack seems imperative to cover the strategic withdrawal of an overmatched contestant to a "previously prepared position." The inference does not follow that the effort is begrudged, if attention is focused upon the incongruity of the arguments hitherto employed. But with an adequate medical background, it seems quite unnecessary to call upon metaphysicians or even vice-presidents for ideas. Any competent surgeon with a penchant for the physiology of genetics would suffice.

The man on the street, it is safe to predict, will agree that civilization one day may be saved by adoption of the proposal which, with poetic justice is filched from Prussian ideology. Though intended for elimination of unfit members of the "master race," physiologists will agree that it works just as well in eliminating future "'supermen." The latest proposal for controlling post-war Germany is strict rationing of petroleum and nitrogen with demolition of reclamation plants. But this holds no such promise of permanence as would birth control of Junkers themselves, whether conditioned or congenital.

Yes, vasectomy is the panacea — truly the least complicated proposal to assure the future peace of the world. What temper-proof possibilities lie in that simple program! There would be no sequelae like Versailles and Locarno when current fighting ceases, merely a superabundance of tenors better suited to rendering **Stille Nacht** than the **Horst Wessel Song.** Thus would the subtle Prussian plotting to eliminate future French, Belgian, Dutch and Polish armies by keeping potential fathers away from home be frustrated. At the same time the man-power salvaged in this manner would be left to serve in restoration of devastated invasion states.

Indisputably the fall in the present birth rate in Japan has coincided with the absence in distant fields of so many legions of fanatical progenitors. That ebb, coupled with the rising tide of deaths on many fronts, may go far toward solving our similar problem in the Far East. However, if a considerable number of Hirchitoworshipers should remain intact, packs of rapacious red squirrels might be drafted for service instead of calling on overburdened Burma surgeons.

What could be simpler? What indeed, could provide better insurance of a lasting peace? Or, in the final analysis, are the lines of the poet too tragically prophetic?

"Some day, perhaps, there won't be no more fightin'—
When there ain't no human bein's left to fight!"

Not lightly may we make our pledge for the crucial year 1944, to be honored more 'in the breach than the observance.' The mounting host of sacrificed American lives should open us to a realization

Hampden Hippocrat

"Life is short and art is long, the occasion fleeting, experience fallacious and judgment difficult." —Hippocrates, 430 B.C.

OFFICERS OF THE
HAMPDEN DISTRICT MEDICAL SOCIETY

President—Dr. E. A. Knowlton
Vice-President—Sidney Carsley
Secretary-Treasurer—Dr. George L. Schadt

of our shortcomings. It is more than a cruel probability that a fuel famine will insure it. Perhaps it is democratic and salutary to let off steam in grousing, but not to the point of national dissention and hindrance of our war effort. Nor is medical bickering any more sacrosanct than that of organized labor or any other self-centered group.

Let us resolve as a nation to come of age. We must learn to think. No longer should we be satisfied with shibboleths and generalities, no matter how high-sounding. China has found them inadequate as food and as war material. Being essentially practical, as well as starving, China has been forced to change her outlook. Instead of the land of promise, she now looks upon America as the land of promises. Similarly Gandhi, the persecuted saint of famished India, is reported to have said, "I want to see a change in the heart of England and of America now if I am to believe that they will be capable of building a better world after the war."

We hope that the news of the rescinding of the Chinese Exclusion Act has reached the Mahatma's capacious ears partially to offset the shameful accounts of the riots in Detroit and in Harlem. A small step has been taken in the right direction, but much more ground must be covered here in the land of the Four Freedoms before we may presume to tell the rest of the world how to live and let live. Humbly then, as we resolve to reform, let us borrow Edwin Arlington Robinson's prayer,

"God's mercy for the world he made I say,
And for the blood that writes the story of it."

Reform, to be lasting, must start with the individual. We as voters must resolve not only to exercise our inalienable right, but also to prepare ourselves to vote in-men of principle as well as talent. One American who loved his country without question, Stephen Vincent Benet bequeathed to you and me this parting inspiration as he left this life for Eternity,

"Now for my country that it still may live,
All that I have, all that I am I'll give.
It is not much beside the gift of the brave
And yet accept it since it's all I have."

—The Hippocrat would add another thought:

Great things, we pledge, from little shall be wrought!

Hampden District Medical Society

At this meeting a permanent secretary-treasurer will have to be elected. This should not be a perfunctory matter for the secretary-treasurer is responsible for billing and keeping the accounts of the Hippocrat.

Despite the fact that the secretary and others receive no compensation we cannot hold meetings and have refreshments unless we have a county assessment.

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Every other county has had it for years. At the January meeting a three or five dollar assessment will be brought up and voted upon.

A third of our men are gone, the social security program is again raising its head for state medicine, and most of us are tired a good part of the time. Those who have the energy and the ability must continue to keep our district society active and abreast of medical happenings. An assessment to help the work is certainly not unreasonable.

The regular Winter meeting of the Society will be held at the Academy of Medicine, Professional Building, 20 Maple Street, Springfield, Massachusetts, Tuesday, January 25, 1944, at 4 p.m.

Dr. Roger I. Lee, President of the Massachusetts Medical Society, will honor us with his presence on this occasion and will make an address.

Dinner at 6 p.m. at the expense of the Society.

George L. Schadt, M. D.,
Acting Secretary-Treasurer.

Sulfa and Penticillin

"At the invitation of Westover Field this reporter and another civilian practitioner attended an evening meeting at which Dr. Janeway of Boston discussed Penicillin and Sulpha Drugs. The following is a running resume of a very instructive two-hour session. For the first time in the writer's life he sat in a hard chair for two hours and did not want to get up and go away.

Dr. Janeway told us that Chemotherapy is new and presents new problems. One of these is drug fever. Sulpha drugs are effective both **in vitro** and **in vivo. Antiseptics** just kill **in vitro.** The sulpha drugs are inhibited by pus due to the presence of para-amino benzoic acid. They are bacteriostatic, not bactericidal. Greatest effectiveness is found in infections due to gram negative cocci and certain gram-positive cocci, of which **staphylococcus** is most resistant. Gram-negative bacilli are very resistant, except in urine where high drug concentrations are achieved. Infection can be re-established in the body if sulpha is stopped too soon. **Streptococcus** is quite apt to multiply again if chemotherapy is stopped before infection is completely quiescent or localized. **Pneumococcus** is difficult to kill because of the capsule, which specific serum attacks. However, sulpha drugs are valuable because they inhibit multiplication and capsule degenerates, so body can handle organisms by phagocytosis. Stop chemotherapy when patient has developed immunity or infection has become quiescent. In four hours after adequate sulfadiazine, **meningococcus** may disappear from spinal fliud, because organisms most susceptible to these drugs.

Indication for sulpha drugs are virulent infections with susceptible organisms which are spreading and menacing patient. Elevated white count important even if temperature is down, as indication for continuation of treatment. Organism should be treated intensely as it may become resistant on inadequate treatment. Accumulations of pus prevent action of sulpha drugs. Blood levels only important if infection fails to respond, so as to be sure failure is not due to inadequate treatment or if patient has kidney disease interfering with drug excretion.

Some G. C. strains will never respond to sulpha.

Fever reaction to sulpha drugs can come from even one local implantation. Janeway has graphs showing what one sulpha tablet will do to temperature curve in sensitized individuals after tempera-

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ture has been down and sulpha has been stopped. Change to diazine when thiazole gives fever. Drug fever in 10-20% of those treated with thiazole. May be increasingly frequent as time goes on. Diazine remains in system a long time. About ten days is long enough without white count, since most agranulocytosis occurs after that time. Prevent renal complications by bicarbonate. Use nitrazine paper to test urine reaction. Both diazine and merazine may block kidneys. Sulfascuccidine fairly effective for lower bowel infections, but may give toxic reactions of aulfathiazole. Bowel operations prepared for by above. Thiazole probably just as good for this.

Merazine absorbed most readily into blood. Give same maintenance dosage as for diazine but less frequently and four grams initially for adults.

Gramicidin is very hemolytic and insoluble. Good for surface treatment. Not inhibited by pus.

Penicillin found by Fleming in 1929 and at that time we were told all we now know about it. He is a British bacteriologist. This is less effective against **Staphylococcus** than against **pneumococcus.** No other drug is as effective against **staphylococcus.** Concentration of penicillin drops very rapidly after administration into the blood stream. Disappears in two hours. When given by muscle holds out longer. S. c. never gives a high blood level. By mouth very poor results; by rectum very poor results; by duodenum get a fair level. HCl of gastric juice destroys it. Normal kidney excretes penicillin rapidly. Penicillin will stay in cavities a long time. It does not get into spinal fluid unless put there. Endocarditis never cured by sulpha or penicillin. Best preparation of penicillin is 70% inert anyway. Get reaction from the inert substances probably True pure penicillin is not very toxic. Can give 3 cc. or 15,000 units by muscle every 3 hours to patients with severe infection; by blood can give 5,000 to 10,000 units per hour to a total dose of 250,000-500,000 in the first 24 hours. Dosage not standardized. Large doses needed for **staphylococcus.** Resistance soon established to penicillin by some staphylococcus strains; hence believe in intensive treatment at start.

Strains of **coccus** may be sulpha-fast and not penicillin fast, though both drugs affect the enzymes of the organism..

Penicillin is unstable. Comes in ampules of dry powder and kept in icebox. Out of icebox unstable in few hours.

Prophylactic sulfonamide use still a question. Scarlet fever epidemic was stopped by small doses of sulfadiazine to all personnel in a Naval group. **Meningococcus** carriers can be freed of **meningococci,** but it may be better to let disease occur and curb it, than to sensitize some men to drug. Might possibly produce a resistant **meningococcus** strain, which could not be cured, though this is hypothetical. This also applies to G. C. When influenza is epidemic and highly virulent, it may be wise to administer good doses of sulfonamide to all patients to prevent secondary pneumonias due to bacteria which develop too rapidly for cure to take place after they occur in many cases. However, answer to this will only come in case of severe epidemic. We do know sulpha drugs effective in pneumonias complicating measles."

Excerpts From Doctor's Letter

Our unit seems to be well organized now and soon we will pull out of here for one more stop and then over. I haven't the slightest idea what the next stop is for, but we've been told not to ask questions.

I'm getting to be Tarzan's cousin now, what with all the drill and sports. Tomorrow for instance we go thirty miles to a range, where we are to put holes in a sleeve towed by a plane. The instructor told us not to expect any medals,

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because recently he saw 20,000 shells thrown at it and the sleeve showed not a hole. If I have any teeth left after shooting those antiaircraft guns I will settle for that and nothing more. We have been over the commando course. They can't do that to us old men—but they do. A couple of days ago I even played my life's first game of basketball —got three baskets, too. Was my tongue hanging out. Medicine? I haven't seen any here? Regards to all,

Dr.————

* * *

Excerpts From Doctor's Letter

I am surviving the Army experience with not too many unpleasant experiences. I can assure you I am building up a real displeasure of regimentation and could speak from experience against socialized medicine. Being told exactly how to treat diseases and forbidding various methods is certainly not stimulating to good medicine nor happiness of contentment. The triplicate and quadruplicate of records, forms, requests and reports serves so well to further the paper-saving drives and to confuse not only the writer, but the recipient. We are impatient with so many meetings of non-professional nature, coming at times with utter disregard to our plans or the good of the patient. . We have to pull men out of assignments to go on troop trains or ships —some times as many as five are away on various trains and troopships. There is no certainty whatever. This morning two of our best men were working along in a smooth group and tonight they are on their way to the Third Service Command in Baltimore, leaving us with no urologist and one eye man short. The replacements coming from them are more than likely to be plastic surgeons or dermatologists.

We had a real experience early this month when the epidemic of grippe hit us. It could not have come at a worse time as the camp was full. Our admission figures rose to a top peak of 235 new patients from one midnight to the next, and for several days it was over 200 daily. We had around thirty-two on three wards on the Medical Service at the time—over a thousand patients of one disease only. All of my ward officers had four wards until we got seven extra officers from a general hospital which was going through. The sun porches of all wards were utilized by adding extra beds to them. The admission of so many new patients would not have been so bad a job, but in the middle of it all the shipping out of units began. To send out 80 or 90 trains of troops in 36 hours is a job all by itself if they are all well. But with a thousand of their men, so often specially trained men with their unit a year and a half in many cases —in the hospital the pressure was on to get them out. Hundreds of phone calls or personal visits by Commanders, Lts., Sergeants begging us to release this boy or that one even before they were completely recovered. The problem of the decision who could go and who must stay fell pretty much to me.

We have been very busy so you can draw your own conclusions especially when you read in the paper yesterday that "millions are flowing over the Atlantic." It will all end some day, not too far away.

As ever, Dr.————

Merger?

Since President E. A. Knowlton of the Hampden District Society raised the question of merger of our Society with the Springfield Aacdemy of Medicine, considerable discussion has taken place which came to a head at a joint meeting of officers of the two societies at which the decision was reached to do nothing.

The Hippocrat asked President F. S. Hopkins of the Springfield Academy of Medicine to report for that body. After

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consulting the Board of Directors, he supplied the following statement:

"We are more than willing to cooperate with the County Society in any way that will be helpful to the physicians of this vicinity. We do feel, however, that each society has important functions of its own that cannot properly be exercised by the other. The purpose of the Academy is primarily the education of all the physicians of Springfield, and our standards of membership are accordingly less strict than those of the County Society. We would not wish to exclude those members who could not meet these requirements.

"The library situation is a complicated one which would be a hopeless tangle if we should attempt to join the two societies. Most of the money for the purchase of boks and magazines has been furnished by the Academy, but the City Library Association has furnished the librarian and cataloguing service and holds title to the books.

"We should be glad to have some joint meetings, but feel that the best interests of the physicians of both Hampden County and Springfield will be best served if each organization maintains its own identity."

Doctor Knowlton still feels that much could be gained by joint meetings even though he has been unable to take time enough to set forth his views in black and white. The Hippocrat would agree that there is merit in the idea, but feels that it is inopportune to make major changes in these old and established organizations while a third or more of their members is absent in war service. The suggestion is offered that the matter not be dropped, but merely tabled until a more opportune time for complete discussions of the problem.

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DR. FOX'S LETTER

From Page 8

and such woodwork as is seen is all hand carved. All the windows, opening onto the central court, are covered with fine hand-wrought iron grill work.

The individual rooms of this building are very much alike. The ceilings are perhaps thirty feet high and vaulted. Ceiling is painted in Arabian design, reds, greens and gold predominating. An electric chandelier of crystal hangs from the exact center. A border of hand carved plaster medallions about two feet wide separates the ceiling from the walls. The windows and the doors are hung with rich red velvet drapes, and the side walls are covered to the height of about six feet with fine oriental tapestry. The floor is covered with a simple but pretty oriental carpet, and lining each wall is the divan. The divan is little more than a cushion material, about as wide as a single mattress and about the same height. There are countless pillows or poufs, strung along at intervals on the divan. The materials and colors of all this tapestry and upholstery defies description. I failed to see one hassock which all service men have been buying.

Shortly after we were taken into the room which I have just described, a servant arrived bearing a round table about four feet in diameter and approximately ten inches high. Six of us including our host were arranged on cushions, legs crossed, about this table, and the meal began. No ration coupons were requested. Meals to the Arab are actually ceremonial and do not vary from one day to the next. You will soon see that it is not surprising to find most of them relatively overweight. Clean white linen cloths were passed to each guest, cloths that looked not unlike an ordinary bath towel but hand-embroidered. A huge brass

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bowl of special design was placed in the middle of the table, and a servant entered bearing a large brass kettle. Each guest washed his hands over the central brass vessel (using American soap) while the servant poured the running hot water. Hands were dried and the vessel taken away.

At the cry of "Zonk" from our host, another servant came forward with the first course. The cover was removed from a shallow earthern dish placed in the center of the table, revealing what appeared to be a pie about two feet in diameter. Each guest proceeded to eat with the fingers (thumb, index and middle) of the right hand; the left hand, for special reasons, being considered impolite. There is no silverware and it was really a lot of fun. The pie proved to be a delicious thing contained pigeon, almonds and a variety of things that I could not identify, but combining to form a flavor unlike any I have ever experienced. Following this pie or course, we were then served three roast chickens and potatoes. Will you try to tear a chicken apart with but three fingers? Then we were served a large dish of mutton and onions. The mutton was very tender and the onions had an apple flavor. Following this course, we were served, call it a chicken omelet pie. Then we had a dish of mutton, chicken, vegetables and raisins. Then came a platter of mutton, chicken and celery and appeared like our chop suey. The seventh course, the traditional "Kus Kus" was interesting because of the manual dexterity required to eat it. It was served in the same sort of vessel as other food, consists of a very coarse meal similar to English dressing, and cooked about a central core of mutton and vegetables. The meat and vegetables impart a very fine flavor for which it is famous Theoretically, one secures a small portion in the hand and by skillful manipulation forms a small ball which is flipped into the mouth by the thumb. However, after a demonstration of the art and our failure to make a ball, our host must have realized that we would never learn and permitted us to eat with large silver spoons. Following the Kus Kus came a course of native fruits, and after another hand washing, we adjourned to another similar room across the court for tea.

Tea drinking, to the Arab, is as ceremonial as partaking of food. There is no way to estimate the amount that he drinks in the course of a day, but it is considerable. It is drunk with all foods and is served to every casual caller who may drop in. It is, invariably, prepared by the host in the presence of his guests. The first tea from the pot is tasted by the host to demonstrate confidence in the flavor and quality. The drink itself is made from green tea, much sugar, and fresh mint leaves; is served in glasses with golden design. As fast as one glass was finished, another took its place and it is considered insulting to drink less than three. The utensils for making tea are beautiful and demonstrate a high degree of craftsmanship in design and construction. Water is heated in a charcoal burning Samovar, and the various ingredients brought in attractive silver cannisters on a silver tray.

Approximately three hours after our dinner had begun, we were finished with the last course, tea.

In spite of such pleasure as I have described, there is nothing I should like so much as being back in good old Holyoke.

As ever,
Sam (Lt. Com. Samuel Fox)
U. S. N. R.

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LETTER FROM DR. FOX

Somewhere in Algiers, Dec. 19, 1943

Dear Hippocrat:

Earlier this week another medical officer and myself visited a neighboring city; one which was the center of Arabian life in this part of Africa until the beginning of the present century. In the course of our visit, we were entertained in the home of a fine Arabian gentleman, Moulay Mustapha ben Azidin.

Moulay Mustapha is approximately thirty, has only one wife (in spite of what you have heard about their polygamy, the younger generation is monogamous), and the son of the judge of the court of nobles and the great grandson of Sultan Moulay Ismail (1672-1727). He dresses in typical Arabian style; speaks excellent French; is studying English; and is especially fond of American cigarettes. He is interested in radio, American motor cars, and photography, drives a Plymouth automobile of recent model and thinks Esquire is, by all odds, the leading magazine. (Page P.M. Gl. Walker—Ed.).

His home, not unlike many of the Arabian homes, is reached by walking through a maze of narrow streets or alleyways in the Medina, and is entirely surrounded by high masonry walls. The home actually consists of a group of connected buildings, and gardens, but I shall attempt to describe only that portion which is utilized for guests and entertaining. This building might be described as four long rectangular rooms, each opening out on a central court and thus forming the sides. Each room is approximately fifty by twenty feet. The building is entirely of masonry construction, there being very little wood available, and is painted a glistening white. The court is paved with beautiful mosaic tile laid in typical design, and in the center stands a marble fountain with overflowing water. The walls of the inner court are covered with mosaic tile to a height of about eight feet. All doorways are beautifully arched

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